

*and its kind.*  
3  
CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PUBLIC EXERCISES

FOR THE

FIRST AND SECOND DEGREES

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

MDCCCLXXIII.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PUBLIC EXERCISES

FOR THE

First and Second Divisions



UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

MDCCLXXIII



TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE CHANCELLOR,  
TO THE REVEREND  
THE VICE CHANCELLOR,  
AND TO THE OTHER MEMBERS  
OF THE  
CONVOCATION,  
THESE SHEETS  
ARE MOST HUMBL Y INSCRIBED.

TO THE

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE CHANCELLOR

TO THE REVEREND

THE VICE CHANCELLOR

AND TO THE OTHER MEMBERS

OF THE

CONVOCAATION

THESE SHEETS

ARE MOST HUMBL Y INSCRIBED

---

---

## INTRODUCTION.

**A**T an occasional meeting of several respectable Members of the University, a few months ago, it happened that the Public Exercises for the First and Second Degrees became, among other topics, the subject of conversation; when all concurred in lamenting the low condition into which they were fallen, and in expressing their wishes that some effectual method might be adopted to restore them to their ancient dignity and importance.

The Writer of the following Essay, who had the honour to be present, was induced by what passed upon this occasion to turn his thoughts to the subject; and was soon afterwards encouraged to pursue it, by hearing from good authority, that the Vice-Chancellor had formally recommended it in a full meeting of the Heads of Houses and Proctors, as a matter greatly deserving their attentive consideration.

A.

Though the Readers to whom these pages are addressed cannot be unacquainted with the general scheme of our Academical Exercises, and the manner in which they are usually performed, yet the Author thought it might facilitate the subsequent inquiry, if he laid them together in one compendious view, with occasional references to the Statutes.

THE Exercises for the Degree of BACHELOR OF ARTS are as follow.

I. DISPUTATIONES IN PARVISO. This exercise is a disputation upon three questions either in Grammar or Logic, to be held three days in every week during full term, and to continue for the space of two hours, namely, from one to three in the afternoon. Every Scholar is obliged to perform this disputation twice, and to be created Senior Soph, some time in his third year; and to repeat the disputation once in every term afterwards to the end of his fourth year. He is moreover enjoined to attend it, when performed by others, during his second, third, and fourth years. Stat. VI. I. 3, 4.



This exercise is constantly held, as the Statute directs ; and occasionally superintended by the Proctors or the Masters of the Schools. So long as the Magistrate is present, the disputation is maintained ; but it cannot be supposed, during his absence, to be carried on with any great degree of vigour. The questions, as might reasonably be expected from their subject matter and frequent discussion, are trite and uninteresting. The Senior Soph, once in every term, comes into the School where the disputation is held, and proposes one syllogism ; which, being done purely to satisfy the letter of the Statute, *juramenti gratia*, is commonly styled doing Juraments. The article of attendance is, by universal consent, totally neglected and forgot.

## II. ANSWERING UNDER BACHELOR.

This exercise is a disputation upon three questions, in Logic for the most part, but sometimes in Grammar, Rhetoric, Ethics, or Politics. It is to be held twice by every Scholar some time in his third or fourth year, and to continue for the space of an hour and half. This disputation, as the title of it intimates,

is held under the *moderamen* of a Determining Bachelor. Stat. vi. 1. 6 compared with iv. 1. 4 and vi. 2. 9.

This exercise is performed much in the same manner as the preceding; except that, as it is held in Lent, the Schools are more frequently visited by the Proctors and Masters.

III. EXAMINATION. The statutable Examiners are Three Regent Masters, to be appointed in rotation by the Senior Proctor. Any other Regent Master may concur in the examination, if he pleases. The number of Scholars to be examined in the same day or class may not exceed six. They are to be examined in Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Ethics, and Geometry, and in the Greek Classics; they are also required to speak the Latin Tongue with fluency. The Vice-Chancellor and Proctors are enjoined to attend examinations, the former twice in every term, the latter four times each, in order to see that they are duly and statutably carried on. Stat. ix. 2. 1, 2 compared with iv. 1. 2 --- 6, 12.

The appointment of Examiners by rotation has long since been disused; and the number of Regents constantly resident in the University is so small, that it would be extremely troublesome, if not absolutely impracticable, to resume it. In the present method, the Candidate solicits Three Masters to be his Examiners, and then obtains the Proctor's appointment or *Liceat*. The Masters usually permit him to chuse his own Classicks. It seldom happens that more than two or three Candidates are examined in the same day, frequently only one. The Statute lays no injunction upon Scholars to attend examinations, and it is become rather unusual so to do. No other Master ever assists at the examination besides those appointed in the *Liceat*.

#### The Exercises for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

I. DETERMINATION. This exercise is intended by the Statute to be performed with great dignity and solemnity every Lent. It opens on Ash-Wednesday. On this day, after prayers and sermon at the University Church,

the Dean of every College is to go in procession with his Determining Bachelors to the Schools, and there to hold a disputation of four hours. He is to read a copy of verses and to propose arguments upon three questions to every Determiner of his house ; which questions are to be defended against him by a Determined or Senior Bachelor, who responds for the Determiner, and is therefore called his *Aristotle*. In the course of the Lent the Determiner is required to hold two disputations, each upon three questions, for the most part in Logic, sometimes in Grammar, Rhetoric, Ethics, or Politics ; in which he is always to maintain the doctrine of Aristotle and the Peripatetics. Stat. vi. 2. 6, 9.

The former branch of this exercise, namely the disputation on Ash-Wednesday, has been generally better supported than any other ; in consequence, no doubt, of its being performed by so considerable a number in the same day, and particularly on account of the Masters of Arts and Senior Bachelors who necessarily bear a part. It has been usual also for the Vice-Chancellor to attend the Schools on this occasion. Nevertheless these



disputations labour under some defects. The questions are, for the most part, trite and unimportant; the arguments arising out of them are consequently still more so; the statutable time is long and tedious: it is no wonder therefore if it too often happens that the disputation becomes languid, uninstruative, and uninteresting. The latter branch of this exercise is performed and attended much in the same way as the second exercise for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. They are indeed, in a manner, held together. The Determiner presides over the disputation of the Scholar who answers under him for the first hour and half; and for the remainder of the time, (which is, according to stated rules, either half an hour, an hour and half, or two hours and an half) disputes upon the same questions himself. These disputations are sometimes held in the morning, and sometimes in the afternoon: the latter time is become very inconvenient, in respect to this exercise and several others.

II. DISPUTATIONES APUD AUGUSTINENSES. A disputation to be held, under the *moderamen* of a Master of the Schools, once in every week in full term, and to continue for

the space of two hours, namely from one to three. Every Bachelor of Arts is obliged to perform this exercise once after his determination; and to repeat it every year, if cited so to do by the proper officer. Stat. vi. 2. 10.

This disputation is held in obedience to the Statute, and managed much in the same form with the others; I mean with little or no attendance: excepting, that the Master of the Schools is by virtue of his office continually present, and presides as Moderator over the whole disputation.

III. DISPUTATIONES QUODLIBETICÆ. Every Bachelor of Arts is required once after his determination to respond upon three questions to some Regent Master appointed to oppose him; as also to any other Disputant upon any question whatsoever: (in the Sciences, 'tis presumed, which he is supposed and required to have studied.) Stat. vi. 2. 12.

This exercise seems to have been intended as a very honourable and comprehensive test of the Candidate's abilities; as it supposes him not only well skilled in the Art of Reasoning, but also competently acquaint-

ed with the merits of every question in those sciences with which he is required to have been conversant. It is at present a mere lifeless form. The Regent Master proposes an argument on some trite question, and the quodlibetical disputation is at an end.

IV, SEX SOLENNES LECTIONES. Six lectures or dissertations, three in Natural, and three in Moral Philosophy, to be delivered in the Schools between the hours of one and two in the afternoon. They are to be of the Candidate's own composing, and of such a length as to take up above half an hour in reading. Stat. vi. 2. 13.

This admirable exercise seems intended to display the Candidate's abilities in another manner. In the preceding he might shew his knowledge of philosophical subjects, and his quickness and sagacity in detecting error and defending truth, in the way of contention and disputation. In the present he is called upon to state, illustrate, and confirm his own sentiments, in the way of cool inquiry and dissertation. Whatever be his attainments in Natural and Moral Philosophy, he is sure to improve them conside-

rably, by thus digesting his thoughts upon a few important topics in an orderly and perspicuous manner: if he has made any laudable advances or useful discoveries, he has a fair opportunity of bringing them into public view.

But these valuable ends are at present totally lost. No private person ever hears these lectures; the Proctors indeed attend them occasionally; but they are generally read *pro forma* in empty school. This exercise, in allusion to its usual fate, has long since obtained the title of Wall Lectures, and is scarce known by any other name.

An attempt has lately been made in one of our Colleges to restore it to its ancient dignity and utility, by obliging every Bachelor to read his solemn lectures publicly in the College Hall: a regulation which does honour to the Society.

V. BINÆ DECLAMATIONES. These declamations are to be of the Candidate's own composing, and to be delivered *memoriter* in the presence of one of the Proctors. The theses are to be assigned, or at least approved, by the Proctor; and are to contain some probable or disputable position, so that three of the Candidates may declaim on the same



subject, one on each side of the question, and the third in the way of *ambigitur* or arbitrator. The hour appointed for these declamations is two in the afternoon. Stat. VI. 2. 14.

This exercise, as the preamble of the Statute intimates, was added to the former of the Philosophical kind, by way of specimen of the Candidate's proficiency in polite learning and elegant composition. It is constantly attended by the Proctor, but very rarely by any one else. The method prescribed by the Statute of declaiming *pro & contra* upon the same thesis has been long neglected; as it should seem, for several reasons, injudiciously.

VI. EXAMINATION. The statutable method of examination, as well as the modern practice, is the same for this Degree as for that of Bachelor of Arts. But the subjects rise considerably in number and dignity. The Sciences are Geometry, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Metaphysics, and History; which last is supposed to include Geography and Chronology: the Candidate is to be examined in the Greek Classics, as before, and also in Hebrew; he is moreover

required to speak Latin with greater purity and facility. Stat. ix. 2. 1, 2. compared with iv. 1. 6, 7, 9---13.

### THE Exercises for the Degree of BACHELOR IN CIVIL LAW.

This Degree may be taken either after that of Master of Arts; in which case it is considered as a Superior Degree, and therefore does not come within the present inquiry: or it may be taken in another way, independently of any Degree in Arts; in which latter case it is nearly coordinate with that of Master of Arts: and the Exercises are as follow.

I. DISPUTATIONES JURIDICÆ. A disputation upon three questions in Civil Law. Every Candidate is obliged to hold this disputation three times; and, once in the three, for the space of two hours. Stat. vi. 4. 2.

This exercise is usually attended by the Professor of Civil Law, but never, I believe, by any one else.

II. EXAMINATION. The same in every respect as the examination for Bachelor of Arts, except that the Candidate is examined in two Sciences more, namely, in Jurisprudence and History. Stat. ix. 2. 1, 2, compared with iv. 1. 2---6, 11, 12, 14.

II. EXAMINATION. The same in every  
subject as the examination for Bachelor of  
Arts except that the Candidate is exami-  
ned in two subjects more namely in Latin  
grammar and history. Class I. A. B.  
commenced with 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

c  
t  
li  
w  
t  
li  
fi  
n  
r  
n  
t  
o  
w  
t  
w



( 10 )

---

## CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

**I**T has long been matter of concern to the Members of this University, those especially whose office and situation have called them to the more immediate inspection of the Public Exercises, to observe how little they answer the salutary purposes they were intended to promote. They are in truth for the most part performed in so negligent a manner, that it is equally impossible they should contribute to the advancement of learning, to the improvement or reputation of the Candidate, or to the honour of the University. And yet it seems to be the general opinion, that the scheme of Exercises laid down by the Statutes is well conceived. When we consider it in theory, and survey it in the Written Code, we are apt for the most part to admire it ;

we find much to approve, and little to reprehend: but when we come to view it as reduced to practice, and exemplified in the Schools, we too frequently discover little more than the outlines of a laudable system, the essential and interior parts of which have long since disappeared. Institutions which seemed admirably calculated to afford solid improvement to the Student, to do honour to his genius and industry, and to derive a lustre upon the place of his education, have either lost all manner of connection with these valuable ends, being sunk into lifeless unedifying formalities<sup>a</sup>; or else point to them feebly and indirectly, obstructed in their tendency by fashion and prejudice, and supported less by their own intrinsic worth, than by the occasional interposition of the Magistrate<sup>b</sup>.

This important difference between the original design and the actual conduct of our Academical Exercises is too striking to be dissembled. It is, I believe, universally acknowledged; and many laudable attempts

<sup>a</sup> See page III. & VIII---X.

<sup>b</sup> See page III---VII. & X---XIII.

have been made to remove it by Magistrates of abilities every way equal to the undertaking : such as may serve to obviate a suggestion which very naturally arises, when institutions apparently wise and salutary contribute not, so much as might have been reasonably expected, to the Public Good. It is true, the views of the Legislator, in every community, will sometimes be disappointed by the inactivity of the Magistrate ; on the other hand, the law may, by its original construction, or by the unforeseen alteration of times and circumstances, have a natural tendency to defeat itself. Few perhaps are more liable to this latter inconvenience than Literary Institutions. Though TRUTH and VIRTUE, the great objects of them, are always the same, yet the methods of pursuing and recommending them vary continually ; it is no wonder therefore, if a course of discipline, which promoted them effectually at one period, lose part of its influence in another ; it is rather a singular recommendation of it, if it be found to preserve its general tendency, and to need only some occasional corrections to obtain its full effect. These seasonable amendments

have been frequently made in our public scheme of education, as circumstances have suggested and required them. With respect to the Exercises, at one time they seem to have been confined entirely to Philosophy<sup>c</sup>; at another, there were no set compositions, but every specimen of the Candidate's Abilities was given in the way of Logical Disputation or Cursory Lecture<sup>d</sup>: and even within thirty years after the compilation of the present body of Statutes, it was found necessary to frame a new exercise for the encouragement of Classical Learning and the Study of Eloquence<sup>e</sup>. Since that period<sup>f</sup> several important additions to the other branches of our literary discipline, and many discreet deviations from former usages, have been adopted, partly through the wisdom and munificence of new Benefactors, and partly by the express direction or tacit permission of the University<sup>g</sup>: such, for instance,

<sup>c</sup> Stat. ix .2. 1.  
vi. 2. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Stat. vi. 2. 13.

<sup>e</sup> Stat.

<sup>f</sup> Viz. A.D. 1662.

<sup>g</sup> Faciunt itaque perverse et inique, qui ab illis [Publicis Professoribus] veteres istas elementarias et pene quotidianas præceptiunculas repossunt; cum nos in studiorum rationem et viam minus utilem minusque expeditam revocatum eunt, vel id ab iis postulant, quod, cum revera maxime volunt, non tamen possunt, non datur exequi.



are the Poetry and Vinerian Professorships, that of Modern History as lately new modelled, and the Lectures in Experimental Philosophy. Mean time the Exercises for

Id potius agant Viri omni ingenii et doctrinae gloria cumulatifsimi, nec suorum Antecessorum vel clarissimis quicquam inferiores, id curent, quod nunquam desinunt curare: teneant in literis principatum; studiis nostris praesint; juventuti Academicæ exemplo, auctoritate, hortatu, monitis, ad omnem eruditionis laudem sese duces præbeant; si quibus major quædam atque eminentior inesse videatur ingenii et virtutis indoles, hos alant, foveant, incitent, præceptis atque institutis, cum publice tum præcipue privatim, adjuvent; edant in publicum egregia suorum studiorum monumenta; proferant interdum in scholas pro sua quisque disciplina aliquid de meliore nota, accuratius et perfectius elaboratum . . . . . Hæc idcirco liberius et fidentius dixi, quia, cum Vos omnes eadem mecum privatim sentire persuasum habeo, tum video idem esse Academicæ ipsius de hac re iudicium non obscure significatum. Nam cum hæud ita pridem Vir Ornatissimus HENRICUS BIRKHEADUS, quem honoris causa nomino, prædia quædam Lectioni Poeticæ hic loci instituendæ liberaliter assignavisset, cumque ea de re legem ferret Academia, totumque hujus institutionis negotium ordinaret, quid quæso fecit? Num ita tulit, uti more illo antiquo atque obsoleto, altero quoque die, Prælector Poetam aliquem, Ovidium puta aut Phædrum, sumeret tyronibus infimæ classis in scholis prælegendum atque interpretandum; quem singulos versiculos grammaticè resolventem, et digitis dimetientem, circulus omnis, si quem forte convocare unquam potuisset, e vestigio reliquisset? Minime: sed cavit, uti commodis intervallis solenniores quasdam haberet Lectiones; et relicto argumenti delectu libero, libera tractandi ratione, satis ei suum officium commendavit, monuitque, sedulo daret operam, ut quoad posset aliquid vestris omnium auribus dignum promeret.

LDWTH ORATIO CREWIANA.

Degrees have continued, in form and matter, precisely the same. It is not therefore in the least surprising, if they are not in every respect so well adapted to the present period, as they were to that in which they were compiled, or to some preceding one, wherein some of them were originally devised; if, during an interval so considerable, some new circumstances have long since arisen in the state of learning and method of education, which have had a fatal tendency to disappoint the good intentions as well of the Legislature as of the Magistrate. One circumstance of the first importance, I will beg leave to mention.

I THINK it may be laid down as a principle, that a literary exercise will always be better supported by the honour which may attend it, than by the authority of the Magistrate. The one is an impulse which acts perpetually and universally, in different degrees perhaps upon different characters, but in some measure upon all; on those most effectually, whom it is the design of literary examinations to bring into public view, men of genius and industry. Whereas the other is partial and temporary, depending

much on the humour and sentiments of the Officer ; an incitement which operates sluggishly and imperfectly ; pointing, as to its farthest object, only to a certain mediocrity ; having little influence on men of genius, whose most moderate attainments commonly carry them beyond that mediocrity, and set them above the fear of a repulse. I apprehend this position, well understood and pursued, cannot be controverted. However if it be not, on the first view, clear beyond all doubt and exception, this at least will be universally acknowledged, that a literary exercise will be far better supported by the hopes of honour and the authority of the Magistrate united, than by the latter only.

Let us examine our Public Exercises upon each of these measures ; and consider what are the incitements laid before the Student to perform them well. It is true, he has the authority of the Magistrate constantly hanging over him ; if he does not acquit himself so as to give satisfaction, he may be repelled from his Degrees. This, besides the present inconvenience attending it, would involve him in some disgrace ; and

so far, it must be acknowledged, the authority of the Magistrate carries with it a small portion of the other motive, and operates on his sense of honour. But we are carefully to observe, that it affects this sentiment only on its weaker and more ignoble side. The Magistrate may, if he pleases, expose to shame; but he has no honours to confer. He comes armed only with terrors; and these his humanity will very rarely permit him to display: the consequence is, the standard of demerit (if I may so express myself) sufficient to call them forth is reduced as low as possible: the most moderate attainments therefore will render the Candidate secure against the inconvenience and infamy of a repulse. It remains then that he has no incitement before him, arising from the authority of the Magistrate, to endeavour to exceed this general standard, and to perform his exercise in any better manner, than such as will enable him to obtain his Degree.

Let us now consider how far the Candidate is induced to perform his exercise well by the hopes of honour. In the first place, as we have no distinction of Classes, the



Degree itself, if he obtain it in any way, is equally reputable. All the honour therefore which he can acquire by a creditable appearance, must depend solely on the opinion and private report of the parties who may happen to be present. How trifling and unimportant this in general is, must be evident to any one who visits our Schools. With respect to that part of the Exercises which consists of Disputations, they are very rarely, if ever, attended by private persons; by the Magistrates as often, I make no doubt, as is consistent with the multiplicity of their engagements, and the frequency and length of the exercise; but these circumstances render it absolutely impossible for them to attend so constantly and uniformly, as to keep up any sentiment of honour or hope of reputation in the Disputant. The same observation is equally true of the Examinations, Solemn Lectures, and Declamations; excepting only, that in the first of these three Masters are present of course, and in the last the Junior Proctor. With these exceptions, there is a perfect solitude throughout the Schools during the performance of every exercise. But even if a Magistrate were always present, he would not

constitute that kind of audience, which is necessary to raise an emulation in the breasts of the Candidates. His authority would doubtless preserve order and regularity; but it is the testimony of Numbers, of Equals especially, engaged in the same pursuit of honour, and, I may add, of interest, which is the effectual incitement to excel.

When for some time the procedure of the Exercises has been such, that no honour is usually gained by a good appearance or lost by a bad one, it becomes unfashionable and invidious to aspire after it. A young man must have acquired a degree of courage, with which natures the most deserving are in general the least furnished, before he will be induced to step forth out of the groupe; and by an effort, easy perhaps to himself, but painful to his neighbours, endeavour to render himself conspicuous. It will be unpopular, for instance, to be a ready Disputant; to hold an argument (even in the most modest, inoffensive manner) as a trial of skill rather than a mere matter of form. I will venture to say a young man would be reckoned vain and pedantic, who should put his

declamation in his pocket, and speak it *memoriter* with grace and propriety. And I believe there are few Officers who do not recollect several young persons of the first character in their respective Colleges, who have gone through their Public Exercises, their Disputations particularly, in a manner so extremely negligent, that a Stranger would have concluded they were utterly unacquainted with the first elements of learning.

If we lay these considerations together, we shall have a full view of the situation of the Candidate, and may see distinctly what motives he has to acquit himself handsomely in the performance of his Academical Exercises. The authority of the Magistrate will influence him so far, as to bring him up to a certain standard of mediocrity, in order to avoid the inconvenience and infamy of a repulse: how low that standard is, and in the nature of thing always will be, and indeed, considering the exigencies of human life, the unequal endowments of Nature and benefits of education, and (which may have some weight) the present demands of

the Church, it ought to be, no one can be ignorant. Beyond this line he has no public incitements to carry him; he has commonly no witnesses to his appearance; no avenue to reputation. He finds himself, 'tis true, in the Temple of Virtue; but no portal opens in it, to give him even a distant view of that other shrine, to which it was supposed to introduce him: she has nothing but her own native charms to excite his wishes; and even those it is become unfashionable and suspicious publicly to admire. The plain consequence is, that his private pursuits of learning will be proportioned to his natural turn, endowments, and opportunities, whatever they happen to be; in the public display of his attainments, if they are moderate, the utmost extent of his ambition will be to avoid disgrace; which nevertheless, by making too nice a calculation, he will occasionally incur: if they are eminent, he will obtain the same end with facility and security, which in the former case was gained with some degree of anxiety and danger; and the more learning and good sense he is blest with, the more cautious will he be of even injuring his repu-



tation by an unnecessary ostentation of his abilities, and by aiming at honours, which, however truly liberal and Academical, are become unfashionable and invidious.

That this is a fair and true representation of his case, seems abundantly evident from a general view of our Exercises, as conducted at present: let us consider some particular instances. Can it in reason be expected that a Student shall take any pains to acquit himself well in his Disputations, when his audience consists solely of his Fellow Disputant, an acquaintance or two perhaps who come to amuse him during his confinement, and a single Magistrate who may or may not (as it happens) hear him go through an argument? Can it be supposed that a young man of ingenuity and learning will be accurate in preparing matter for a Philosophical Disquisition, and take pains to clothe it in reputable language, in order to read a Solemn Lecture, to which he is morally certain he will have but One Auditor<sup>b</sup>,---which 'tis highly probable will be literally a Wall Lecture? which it would

<sup>b</sup> See page x.

be reckoned invidious and impertinent in any private person to attend, and a mark of vanity in the reader to deliver in such a voice and manner, as to render it intelligible? Again, how extremely slender is the inducement, in comparison of what it might be, to a young man to acquit himself with honour at his Examination? when the only persons who are to be witnesses to this last and great test of his abilities and industry are, at the utmost, a Magistrate and three Masters. The constant attendance of the former is not required by Statute, nor can in any reason be expected: the latter are generally a kind of Committee of his Friends; who, though under such obligations as can never fail to render his examination fair and statutable, yet will of course be cautious of distressing him by unnecessary inquiries, and will rather consult his security by a moderate test, than his honour by a severe one. Besides, to repeat what I take to be a fundamental consideration, it is not the presence of three or four persons, however respectable in office and character, that will serve to excite the emulation and call out the abilities of the

Candidate. "It is the number as well as  
 "the dignity of the audience, which  
 "makes the ORATOR; a thin assembly  
 "renders him languid and indifferent."

It is the same in every exertion whatsoever,  
 which has reference to the Public Opinion,  
 So in this case, as well as others: suppose  
 the attainments of the Candidate to be as con-  
 siderable as you please: the three Masters  
 will be the sole depositaries of his reputa-  
 tion: they will doubtless mention him with  
 honour as occasion may offer; but the  
 testimony is confined within a small circle;  
 it has at best a very imperfect influence on  
 his character; it often so happens that it has  
 none at all.

It should seem therefore upon a full view  
 of the matter, that the principal reason of  
 the decline of our Academical Exercises is,  
 that they are become TOO PRIVATE. And  
 of this circumstance it is not difficult to as-  
 sign the cause.

WHEN they were instituted, whether we  
 have respect to the compilation of the pre-  
 sent Code, or rather to the more ancient sta-  
 tutes and usages upon which it was formed,

the state of literature, as every one knows, was extremely different from what it is at present. Learning was then in fewer hands: there was little private Collegiate instruction: the whole process of University Education was carried on in the Schools; and the Young Academic imbibed all his knowledge either from the Lectures of the Professors<sup>1</sup>, or the Public Exercises of his Equals and Seniors. Accordingly, among many other instances which might be mentioned, Scholars are bound by Statute to attend the Disputations *in Parvise* from one to four years standing. The consequence was, that every School was a Public Theatre. Be-

<sup>1</sup>—non erat, uti bene nostis, adeo communis et per-  
vulgata Scientiarum interior et perfectior cognitio, neque  
ubivis occurrebat qui Artium elementa paulo subtilius et  
copiosius explicare posset: accedebat bonorum librorum  
magna paucitas: cogebantur igitur foris quærere quod  
non habebant domi. Itaque boni adolescentes turmatim  
itabant ad Scholas; Publicum Professoreni quasi oracu-  
lum quoddam audiebant, "intentique ora tenebant:"  
elapsa propemodum hora, ad alium ac deinde alium fur-  
sum deorsum protinus cursitandum erat, hunc e Dialec-  
ticæ spinetis sese explicantem, illum fortasse Rhetoricæ  
flosculos legentem: tandem aliquando domum se conse-  
rebant plenos reportantes codicillos, unde, nescio quomo-  
do, magno certe cum labore ex magna rerum farragine,  
pauillum tamen quiddam extricabant, quod esset ex usu.  
Alia autem hodie rerum est facies, &c. LOWTH ORATIO  
CREWIANA.



sides, the Scholastic Learning then so much in vogue, and the unsettled state of questions innumerable, which are now either entirely disregarded or more clearly ascertained, naturally introduced and supported such a love of wrangling and disputation, as would infallably ensure an audience to every exercise, and animate the Student in the performance of it. How extremely different is the present situation of things, I need not observe. We have only to consider the natural consequences of this great alteration. From thence it seems to have arisen, that our Schools are solitary and unfrequented: this solitude and infrequency have operated reciprocally, and rendered the Exercises, every day, if possible, less amusing and instructive: till at length they are, for the most part, become mere lifeless forms; supported only by the letter of the Statute and the authority of the Magistrate; attended with little edification to the Student, and still less honour either to himself or to his University.

I CANNOT therefore but humbly apprehend, with great deference to the opinion of so numerous and respectable a Body, as that

under whose wisdom and authority any improvement must, in its several stages, be contrived and matured, that an evil of such a magnitude deserves the serious consideration of the University: that as it does not seem to have taken its rise from any neglect in the Administration, so it cannot be effectually remedied by the extraordinary vigilance of any Magistrate; but that as it is the natural consequence of an important alteration in the state of learning and prevailing mode of education, nothing less can reach it, than some new regulations, by which the scheme and form of our Exercises may be better adapted to the present situation of both: and lastly, that if any method could be hit upon, which would answer this desirable purpose, such as would perfectly coincide with the general plan of our discipline, and occasion no extraordinary trouble in the execution, it could, I conceive, be attended with no inconvenience, would operate very favourably on the private studies and deportment of our younger Members, do singular service to the cause of learning, and great honour to the University.

The following sketch does not claim to come within this description : if any part of it should happen to be useful in any future deliberations on this subject, the design of the Writer will be answered.

THE EXERCISES may be conveniently divided into three kinds. The first and most important branch, which, if well regulated, would have a very extensive and beneficial influence on the rest, is the Examination. The second consists of Dissertations, Declamations, or other Philosophical or Philological Compositions. The third, of such exercises as are performed in the way of Logical Disputation. We will consider them in their order ; confining our observations, for the present, to the Degrees in Arts ; after which it will be easy to extend them to that in Civil Law.

The whole MATTER of the Examination appears to be so well conceived, as to be capable of little, if any, improvement : I would propose a slight alteration in the MANNER of it ; slight in itself, but very

important in its effect. It seems abundantly evident, that the decline of our Academical Exercises is, in a great measure, if not entirely, owing to this circumstance, that they are become PRIVATE; the plain consequence is, they do not suggest to the Candidate any idea of honour or reputation; there is no emulation, no modest pursuit of glory or victory; *effugere est triumphus*,---the only object, and that, as might well be expected, not very steadily pursued, is to avoid disgrace. Now with respect to the Examinations, the most probable method of rendering them more public, is to make them less frequent. In the present state of learning and system of education (as has been before observed of the Exercises in general) it cannot be expected, nor is it indeed to be wished, that young men should crowd to the Schools every day to attend them; if they were held but once a week, the case would be pretty much the same; if they were even limited to once a Term, I am very apprehensive that the frequency of the entertainment would soon abate the relish of it. The same considerations apply still more forcibly to the Masters of Arts, and the rest of the Senior part of the Uni-



versity; who would not easily be induced to attend frequent exhibitions of this kind; and yet their presence is very desirable, could it be obtained, to add weight and dignity to the process, and excite the emulation of the Candidates.

In the present statutable method, the Examination is supposed to be held by the Regent Masters, as a kind of Delegacy from the Congregation; every Member of which House may examine if he pleases<sup>k</sup>. The Senior Proctor is to assign three Regents to make up this Delegacy; their office is to continue *per tres dies examinatorios*; and they are to examine only fix in a day, which number the modern practice has greatly diminished. The benefit resulting from this last article is, that the Masters have time to examine them very fully; the disadvantage attending it, that the *dies examinatorii* must be so extremely numerous, and occur so frequently, that no one but the Examiners will attend: and this has produced the fatal effects above specified. Lastly, the

\* Stat. ix. 2. 1, 2.

testimonial to be given by the Examiners is conceived in general terms, *laudabiles progressus et pares ei gradui quem ambit fecisse comperimus*;--assigning no honourable distinction to superiour merit. I would propose therefore, that the Examination should be held in the presence of the Congregation, by two Masters appointed either annually, or rather once in three years, under the title of Examiners or Censors, who should by virtue of their office, like Lecturers, Professors, &c. be Members of Congregation; and at one stated time in the year for each Degree, for so many days as may be requisite. I would suppose, for instance, that a certain week in Lent Term<sup>1</sup> were allotted for the Examination of all who are Candidates for their First Degree the ensuing year, and another in Act Term for that of Candidates for the Second: that a Congregation were held in each week, for so many days as shall be necessary, either in the Theatre, or in the Natural Philosophy School properly fitted up for that purpose, at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor: that every Member of the

<sup>1</sup> The first week seems to be preferable on one account, namely, that the Candidates who are of sufficient standing may proceed to their degrees immediately afterwards.

Congregation should have a right, as at present, to examine the Candidates, but that the Censors or Examiners should take the general management of it. As a great deal depends upon the order, place, and manner of examination, I would suppose, if it be held in the Theatre, the Examiners to be seated in the rostrum on one side, and the Candidates to appear, one by one, according to seniority, in that on the other: if in the Natural Philosophy School, in two rostrums, in like manner situated and adapted to the purpose. In this way I would propose that every Candidate should be examined severally in the presence of the House; and that, according to their appearance, they should afterwards be ranged by the Examiners in three Classes; *CLASSIS PRIMA* and *SECUNDA*, comprehending those who had distinguished themselves in different proportions, to be made public; and the third Class, comprehending such as did not deserve such particular notice, to be passed over in silence. Six days, it is probable, would suffice for one Examination, and four for the other. I should conceive, that an Examination so contrived, so many Candidates appearing together, the Congregation sitting the whole

time, and this only ten days in the year, (besides that the parties themselves would constitute a large assembly) would be constantly and numerously attended, not only in the infancy of the institution, but as long as it should continue. The necessity of appearing before so numerous and respectable an audience, where he may lay the foundation of his reputation and future fortunes, must be a wonderful incitement to the Student to pursue his preparatory studies; and the Class he is placed in being matter of public notoriety, he is sure to have a testimony proportioned to his attainments, which will follow him as well out of the University as in it.

The benefits which may be expected from an institution of this sort, I should hope, are so very considerable, that an objection, if any arise, would be cautiously discussed and examined, before it were admitted to counterbalance them. I will mention such as occur to me.

In the first place, it may be feared, that when a number of Candidates are to pass their Examination in one day, the greater



part may not be examined so fully and thoroughly as they ought to be; the Examiners may dwell with pleasure on the display of uncommon merit, and pass over mediocrity and demerit: and it is supposed that this evil has been found in fact to attend other public Examinations. Now I take this inconvenience, if ever it has arisen, to be owing partly to a circumstance, which may, at first mention, appear inconsiderable, namely, to the local situation of the Candidate and Examiner in the house, which I would therefore wish to guard against; and partly to its not being made an indispensable article, that every individual Candidate be severally examined. Now the method above mentioned provides, it is apprehended, for both these points. Every Candidate appears in his turn, in the full view of the Congregation and the rest of the assembly; the questions put to him and his answers are heard distinctly by every one: it seems therefore inconceivable that the Examiners, thus acting under the public eye, should so far consult their ease or indulge their partiality, as not to carry every separate Examination to a reasonable length, and proportion it fairly and equitably to the apparent powers of the

**Candidate.** The PUBLIC FORM of the Examination is a perpetual security, as well against the possible negligence of the Examiners, as against the slothfulness of the Student.

Secondly, it may be thought that the necessity of a Congregation sitting for several days together will be an unreasonable burthen on the Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, and Regents. I really think, on a fair view of the matter, it will be found to diminish their trouble, instead of increasing it. As to the Regents, whose duty it is at present to examine, this method only concentrates the attendance of the whole year into a few days: the alteration therefore is, on this account only, in their favour. But the probable consequence of an Annual Examination will be, that young men will enter at a particular time of the year, in order to fall in conveniently with it. The result of this (besides the great benefit and convenience arising from it in their private institution) will be, that they will generally offer as Candidates for their Degrees all together; a circumstance which will relieve the Vice-Chancellor Proctors and Regents from a great,

and in truth a very unreasonable, burthen, to which they are subject at present, namely, a perpetual attendance on Congregations<sup>m</sup>, for conferring, as it frequently happens, a single degree. This consideration, exclusive of the other, seems to be a full answer to the objection; but if both together were not so, the Magistrates and other Members of Congregation would doubtless think their time well bestowed on a business of so salutary a tendency.

A third objection may be, that an Examination so very public is too formidable to young men of modest dispositions and perhaps moderate attainments. If this would be a fault in the institution, it would certainly be on the right side: we know at least, by fatal experience, the ill tendency of the contrary extreme. But in fact, men in every period of life scarce know the full extent of their own abilities, and the presence of mind they are capable of, till they are put to the trial. It is extremely fortunate for them, when the powers they are

<sup>m</sup> On a very moderate computation, not less than sixty mornings in the year.

blest with happen to be called out early, The sooner young men are taught to appear and speak in public, the better; this very consideration is a common argument in favour of Public Schools, and an objection to private ones; it gathers strength in a surprising proportion, when it comes to be applied to the last scene of education, the Universities. And, I doubt not, many men of superiour abilities have been lost, in some measure to themselves, greatly to the University, entirely to the Public, for want of some Academical institution or happy opportunity, which might have induced them early to exert their talents, and corrected in due time that excess of modesty, which frequently attends merit of every kind, and renders it, not perhaps less amiable, but certainly less useful. This circumstance then of obliging young men of various tempers and abilities to appear, after three or four years residence in the University, before a numerous and respectable assembly, is, in my humble opinion, so far from being an objection to the institution, that it is a singular recommendation of it. The thing will grow familiar to the Student, from



his observation on his acquaintance, even before he comes to experience it himself : and when he has once appeared in public, with tolerable satisfaction and confidence, on so trying an occasion, it is probable he will have no very awful apprehensions of any other which may afterwards occur to him. Mean time it is to be understood, that the Examiners will naturally proportion their inquiry to the apparent abilities of the Candidate ; their good sense will of course lead them to display the superiour attainments of some, and their humanity will move them, with due moderation, to throw a shade on the defects of others ; and they will act too much under public observation to shew an unjustifiable lenity to any. It is far from being the design of literary trials to depress modesty or to lay open imperfection : they are not supposed, like the petty tyrant in story, to measure every genius by one common standard ; but, by a discreet application of it, to unfold every, even the meanest, capacity to its full extent ; to excite young men to a due attendance on a course of wholesome discipline, in contemplation of the time when their REPUTATION will

depend on the use they shall have made of it; and thus, by motives which no ingenious mind can resist, to lay them under a kind of necessity of rendering themselves, in their several proportions, useful and ornamental to Society.

There is one particular objection, which may be conceived to lie against making the Examination for the Second Degree so public; namely, that Men of long standing, Clergymen for example, as is often the case, who have occasion to proceed to this Degree late in life, will never endure to undergo so public an inquiry, in such branches of learning especially, as they have long since neglected and forgot. The difficulty would, no doubt, subsist for a season, and would strike very forcibly on those who should happen to be involved in it. And yet, I think, it would in a few years lose much of its terror. Men who had already passed a public Examination for their First Degree, would not apprehend so much, even at any time of life, from a similar trial for their Second. Their situation would, if necessary, plead their excuse, and bespeak the lenity

and respect of the Examiners. However, if it were found to be a difficulty, which some few persons could not persuade themselves to encounter, yet it should seem that the institution, if on the whole desirable, ought not to be given up in condescension to their particular circumstances and convenience. But after all, an exception might be made in their favour. Suppose a provision were to be framed in the style and tendency of the clause for accumulating the two Degrees in Divinity<sup>a</sup>, that a person who had passed ten years from his admission to his first Degree, &c. might be examined, after the present manner, in any term. It may become matter of consideration, whether this indulgence ought not to be strictly confined to this single case. It is certainly to be wished, that any rule to be established should be general, and the practice uniform. It seems at least inexpedient to create any other exception by Statute. The Convocation have it always in their power to act in such cases *pro re nata*. But the following provision may probably have a beneficial influence on this matter.

<sup>a</sup> Stat. x. 2. 4. Si qui olim, &c.

As it is always to be supposed, and must sometimes happen, that a Candidate for either Degree may not satisfy the Examiners at his first appearance, it seems expedient not to expose him to the hazard of public shame at the next Annual Examination; but to leave him to the discretion of the Examiners on a second trial in private, just as he would be circumstanced upon a repulse under the present establishment. Now private Examinations having, under this regulation, a visible connection with so dishonourable a circumstance as a prior repulse at the public one, they will in all probability be ever seen in an unfavourable light; and this association, so long as any sense of honour and spirit of emulation can be supported, may render a dispensation for a By-Examination a very undesirable, because an unrespectable, favour.

The proper choice of the Examiners being a point of the first consequence in the execution of such a plan as this, I would presume that great care would be taken to place the nomination in such hands, as that



there might be the least probability of their being appointed by rotation, or in any other method which might introduce a fortuitous or partial choice : that moreover the office would be invested with some such respectable appendages, as to render it rather an object of honour than of interest. As it may require some degree of preparation and practice, to execute it with such address and facility as may do credit to the University, it may perhaps be expedient to make it a triennial appointment rather than an annual one.

I shall conclude this subject with a few remarks on the MATTER of the Examination.

As THIS is the only exercise which affords the Student any opportunity of shewing his proficiency in Mathematical Learning, it seems much to be wished that a particular attention were paid to a Science of such extensive utility. I would propose then that a Candidate for the Bachelor's Degree should be examined in the first six

books of Euclid, in the nature and use of Numbers, particularly vulgar and decimal Fractions, and in the Elements of Algebra; and for the Master's, in the eleventh and twelfth books of Euclid, in some convenient System of Conic Sections and Trigonometry, in the nature and use of Logarithms, and in the principles of applying Algebra to Geometrical Subjects. Such a regulation would, I am persuaded, do great honour to several Students now in the University, and excite a useful emulation in others; and would moreover be naturally so managed by the Examiners, as not to impose unreasonable difficulties on any.

The Statute lays a particular stress on the Candidate's being able to express himself fluently in Latin. The principal reason perhaps of this provision was, that he might more effectually assist in carrying on the business of Convocation and the discipline of the Schools: and, on this account only, a familiar acquaintance with the language is certainly very desirable. But the advantage of this attainment is not confined to the University. It will be found ex-

tremely convenient on several occasions. The ready use of Latin is much gone down in the world within these last hundred years ; in consequence of which, there is not that universal correspondence between learned men in all parts of Europe, which we may observe in former periods ; whence 'tis probable the advancement of true learning may be somewhat obstructed. For these reasons it is much to be wished, that this part of the Examination may be conducted in the most advantageous manner. The method suggested by the Statute<sup>o</sup> is well adapted to the purpose ; ---the presence of a respectable assembly will, I doubt not, render it effectual.

It has been sometimes suggested, that the general course of our Academical Studies, during the first seven years, is not sufficiently directed to that Profession, for which the greater part of our Graduates are intended, and into which they usually enter within that period. So far as relates to the Public Scheme of Education, the answer is obvious ;

° Stat. ix. 2. 1. Id quod---tenetur.

G

the Student being supposed to be admitted early into the University, and to spend the first seven years in such general and instrumental branches of learning, as may introduce him with advantage, either to the study of his particular profession, or to the ordinary duties of public or private life. Though at present indeed the case is something different; and such Students as are designed for either of the three Faculties usually turn aside into the preparatory studies, and too often into the employments, of their profession, before they are admitted to the Second Degree; yet 'tis impossible so to frame the Public Exercises, which are for general use, as that they should have immediate respect to any particular science or situation in life. This desirable end can, for the most part, only be obtained, and is in fact amply provided for, by Collegiate and Professorial Lectures; such, for example, of the latter sort, as are now read in Divinity, in Anatomy and Chemistry, in Civil and English Law. Nevertheless, in one particular instance, and that in a point of the first importance, it is possible to render the Examination at the same time serviceable to every Candidate, and more especially to



such as are intended for the Study of Divinity. I would propose then, that one of the Books prescribed by statute as a test of the Candidate's acquaintance with the learned languages, should be the New Testament<sup>p</sup>; of which the former part seems most proper for the First Examination, and the latter for the Second: and to this I would add the Articles of the Church of England<sup>q</sup>. Considering to whom I address myself, I need not enlarge on the extensive utility of such a measure, taken in every point of view; in an age which renders it peculiarly necessary, to send out our Youth well instructed in the principles of Christianity, engaged early on the side of Truth and Virtue, and steadily attached upon mature conviction to the purest Church in the world.

<sup>p</sup> I would suppose the attention of the Candidate not to be confined to verbal criticisms, but also directed to the scope and argument of the passage, particularly in such as respect fundamental doctrines: and this more or less, at the discretion of the Examiners, as the Candidate may happen to be in holy orders, or designed for any other profession.

<sup>q</sup> Conformably to the spirit of Stat. III. 2. Tutor vero, &c. and ix 5. 3. Lectis prius, &c.

The Statute requires a Candidate for the Second Degree to understand the Hebrew Tongue. I cannot but think that the most natural and useful method of Examination in this particular, would be to propose to him some part of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Book of Genesis, for instance, might afford a sufficient specimen of his acquaintance with the language. This measure, invariably adhered to, would answer the salutary intentions of the Statute; and would be so far from embarrassing the Student, that I am persuaded he would ever after consider it as a fortunate circumstance, that he had been obliged, at an early period, to acquire a branch of knowledge, so reputable to the Scholar, and so useful to the Divine.

It is probable some other parts of the Examination, those for example which respect Natural Philosophy and Metaphysics, might be conducted with more advantage, and have a better influence upon the preparatory studies of the Candidate, if, instead of the ordinary method of proposing a series of questions, some approved System were made the basis of the Examination. How far,

and in what Sciences, it may be expedient to ascertain this matter, or to leave it to the discretion of the Examiners, will deserve consideration.

THE SECOND kind of Exercises consists of Philosophical and Classical Compositions; namely, the Solemn Lectures and Declamations. The admirable design and tendency of these exercises needs no illustration; neither is there any thing wanting to give them their due effect, but a numerous and respectable audience. It appears impossible to obtain this essential point, so long as they are allowed to be held every day or week in every term. The certain consequences of this method, with respect to the Solemn Lectures, we know by a long unvaried experience: and had not the University, in the Statute of Declamations which is a later institution, well apprized of this inconvenience, provided a partial remedy\*, the fate

\* ---Tantisper expectabunt [Declamaturi] dum Procuratorum alter, vel Pro-Procuratorum aut Magistrorum Scholarum aliquis (quorum ut semper aliquis Exercitiis hisce ab initio ad finem intersit, et absente Vice Cancel-

of both exercises would doubtless have been the same. I would therefore propose that a week or ten days in Act Term, some time preceding the Examination, be set apart for the performance of these Exercises : that the subjects as well of the Lectures as of the Declamations be previously assigned or approved, and the order of the Speakers adjusted, by the Proctors and Examiners ; and the whole made public, instead of the present *Literæ Monitoriales*, under their direction, just as the *Ordo Determinantium* is now settled and published by the Collectors. The Theatre seems to be far the most commodious place for these Exercises, and is indeed the ancient School for others of the more solemn kind, particularly in Arts\*. I would suppose the Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, and Examiners, usually to attend in form, in the same manner as the three first do the Speeches of the Collectors ; and the presence of one Proctor at least, together with one or both of the Examiners, to be

larlo præsit etiam, vigore hujus Statuti cautum esto) ipsis signo dato ut rostra conscendant, dicendi copiam faciant, Stat. VI. 2. 14.

\* See Stat. VII. 2. 8. and VII. 1. 3.



indispensable, conformably to the clause above cited in the Statute of Declamations. I would propose moreover, that the Candidates should be bound, as to a part of their Exercise, to attend every day; and that a penal obligation to the like attendance should be laid on all Bachelors of Arts and Undergraduates; which latter, though it might not operate universally, would always have some effect, and might be enforced occasionally at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors, if ever (what considering the nature and circumstances of the Exercise is extremely improbable) it became necessary. It should seem that the Declamations ought indispensably to be delivered *memoriter*; but that the Lectures, being of a philosophical turn, of greater length, and rather calculated to shew clearness and strength of judgment than eloquence, may without impropriety be read from notes. I cannot but think that these Classical and Philosophical Prolusions, worked up with that care and accuracy, and delivered with that correctness of voice and manner, which the presence of a respectable assembly will always command, would be of infinite benefit to the Composer and Speaker, afford much en-

tainment and some instruction to the Hearers, and do great honour to the University. And if a small collection of the best performances were to be annually printed, this measure would be an additional incitement to excel; and may reasonably be expected, considering the age and standing of the Candidate, to produce frequent specimens of genius and learning, in the Philosophical branch especially, not unworthy the notice of the Public.

WE HAVE spoken of the Examinations, and of the Classical and Philosophical compositions: the Disputations remain to be considered. A Logical Disputation properly conducted has many advantages to recommend it, whether regarded as a mean of improvement or as a test of merit. In the former view, it accustoms the Student to think and speak with Order and Precision; to lay the several parts of the subject before his own mind, and that of his hearers, in such a train, and so detached from foreign matter, as may best lead to a sure discovery, or to a clear communication, of the truth. Add to this, that, like all other well devised exercises either of mind or body, it

strengthens as well as directs the faculty; it gives not only a grace and regularity to its movements, but also a vigour and facility. These recommendations, as is well known, Mathematical Learning has in common with Logical Disputation. The former indeed has this great advantage, that handling such propositions only as are capable of strict demonstration, it leads the mind to her object by a straighter and plainer path; it inures her consequently to a clearer investigation and a more vigorous apprehension of truth: whereas the latter, being commonly engaged in such inquiries as terminate in a high probability only, or moral evidence, in some degree loses this advantage; but then it compensates the want of it by another, namely, that it habituates the understanding to such KIND OF INVESTIGATION, and conducts it by such STEPS AND PROCESSES, as will most frequently occur in every future disquisition: for, whether in the labours of the closet or in the business of life, how great is the number of those truths which we are obliged to embrace upon moral evidence, in comparison of those which are capable of mathematical

demonstration ? It is likewise to be observed, that though the discovery of truth necessarily involves the detection of falsehood, and therefore every art which has the one for its end must virtually promote the other ; yet, as the various objects of logical inquiry are more liable to false reasonings than those of mathematical, so also is the Art itself more particularly serviceable in tracing and confuting them. Truth and Falsehood are so often undesignedly interwoven together, that 'tis no small advantage to have the understanding well disciplined in the best methods of separating them : but when it is further considered, how much it has been the hateful study of some few Men of Genius in every age industriously to confound them, and that in points most interesting to Mankind, the true Philosopher will be the more desirous, as well for his own ease and security as for the common welfare, to qualify himself, in the clearest and most decisive manner, to detect and expose error, however speciously or confidently recommended. We cannot look into the labours of those who have, from time to time, done this



eminent service to the Public, without remarking, that, as on the one hand Falshood and Sophistry naturally introduce and support each other, so on the contrary, these illustrious persons have constantly had the advantage of their adversaries, as well in the CLEARNESS of their CONCEPTIONS and the DUE PROCEDURE of their ARGUMENT, as in the goodness of their cause. Last-ly, Logical Disputation, considered with a view to the improvement of the mind, has also this incidental advantage, that being carried on *viva voce*, and in the way of friendly altercation, it quickens the apprehension, and exercises the invention and memory, by obliging the Student to take instantaneously the full scope of an unexpected argument, and to recur without premeditation, either to his natural powers or to his acquired stores, in order to weaken or repel its force. It cannot, I think, be doubted that a Logical Disputation, well conducted, is a good test of merit: inasmuch as it furnishes the Student with a fair opportunity of shewing not only his expertness in the Exercise, but also the vigour and quickness of the

faculty, which it is intended to direct and improve. Moreover the Disputant, at the same time that he discovers his natural abilities and his knowledge of the Art of Reasoning, cannot fail to give some proof of his acquaintance with the Science from which the question is taken.

It seems therefore to be a prejudice not favourable to the interests of learning and education, to extol either Logical or Mathematical Exercises to the exclusion or disparagement of the other. They stand admirably well together : they are the orderly application of the same reasoning faculty to different subjects, and lead by different paths to the same important ends, the improvement of the understanding and the discovery of Truth.

These reflections naturally suggest to us two objects of great importance in the conduct of our Academical Exercises : the one to introduce a few additional specimens of Mathematical Knowledge ; the other to put the Logical Disputations upon a useful and respectable footing. The former point has been already attended to ; the latter remains to be considered.

The Lent Disputations are confessedly better supported under the present establishment than any other; and that, for reasons which will also render them more easy to be maintained and improved\*. Those on Ash-Wednesday in particular are so well superintended, that if the time were shortened, the questions confined to some particular Sciences, such as are suitable to the standing of the Senior Bachelor who is Respondent, and the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors were to give their attendance in form, as they do at present at some of the Professorial Lectures; I am induced to think they would very soon be conducted in a respectable and edifying manner. A few slight regulations similar to these above mentioned, could not fail, I should conceive, to secure the due performance of the other disputations which follow in the course of the Lent. It seems, for instance, advisable to reduce the time indiscriminately to the same length; perhaps two hours may be sufficient, the first for the Scholar's disputation, the second for the Bachelor's: it appears highly expedient

\* See page vi.

to limit the Determiner to such Sciences as are suitable to his standing and situation, suppose to Physics, Metaphysics, Ethics, and Natural Law: and above all, to render it necessary to the validity of the Exercise (as at present is the case with some others) that a Magistrate should be present either the whole, or at least the greater part of the time. This last regulation would be attended with singular advantage, and might, I conceive, be carried into execution without imposing too great a burthen on the annual Magistrates, if instead of the four Regents appointed *de quatrduo in quatrduum*<sup>u</sup>, the same or a greater number were nominated with their own consent and with a stipend proportionable to their trouble, to superintend, together with the Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, and Masters of the Schools, the disputations of the whole Quadragesima. It should seem that eleven or twelve would be a more convenient hour than the present.

The remaining Disputations for each Degree are the *Disputationes in Parvulo*, for the first, and the *Disputationes apud August-*

<sup>u</sup> Stat. VI. 1. 3. compared with VI. 2. 15.



*tinenses*, and *Quodlibeticae*, for the second. As to that part of the *Disputationes in Parvilo* which is usually called Juraments, and the *Disputationes Quodlibeticae*, I confess I see no probability of ever rendering either of them an useful or reputable Exercise. The principal part of the *Disputationes in Parvilo*, which is usually called Generals, appears to labour under two inconveniencies: the one, that they are too long: the other, that the Officers appointed more immediately to superintend them, being nominated occasionally for a short time, without their previous consent, and bound only by a penal statute, will not constantly give their attendance. In order to remedy these inconveniencies, it seems advisable to reduce the time to one hour, to assign the superintendence of them, *a principio ad finem*, to the *Magistri Quadragessimales* above hinted at: and, lastly, for the better attendance and greater solemnity, as well as for the ease of the Proctors and Masters, to appoint a particulr week or fortnight for the purpose of holding them.

As the Exercises for the Second Degree are numerous and respectable, and the *Disputationes apud Augustinenses* are much the

same as several others which the Candidate has already performed, I should humbly recommend it to relieve him from an attendance, which affords him little opportunity of shewing his progressive improvement, and is consequently more likely to abate than quicken his emulation, by detaining him too long *discipulorum inter cathedras*, engaged in pursuits which do not rise in dignity, as he advances in standing and knowledge. On the other hand, as the Exercises for the First Degree are not numerous or burthen-some, I should conceive that a small addition might be made to them, similar to what was some time since made to those for the Second, with equal propriety and advantage†. I would propose therefore that every Scholar should be obliged to deliver two declamations in the same form and manner as the Bachelor ; and that two or three days should be allotted for this purpose in the same term.

THE EXERCISES of this and other Universities have usually been held in Latin ; and there is doubtless a great propriety in

† See Preamble of Stat. vi. 2. 14.

thus adopting a dead language, which, among literary men, and in places of general education, is become an universal one. Yet I cannot help suggesting on this occasion, that as the present Declamations for the Second Degree, and these additional ones for the First, (if they should take place) are evidently calculated to improve the Student in classical learning and polite composition, it is surely desirable that he should pay some attention to the Language of his own age and country, as well as to that of Ancient Rome. It is indeed sometimes urged, and I believe with undoubted truth, that a person who writes well in Latin will very rarely fail to do the same in English; inasmuch as, by an accurate application to one language, he will naturally gain such an acquaintance with Universal Grammar, and such a habit of attention to the true import and more elegant arrangement of words and phrases, as will facilitate his progress in every other; and the same good sense and taste which recommend his compositions in a foreign tongue, will not forsake him when he sits down to write in his own. We may venture perhaps to go one step further, and affirm, that the Student

who has exercised himself much in the Latin tongue, and in that of his own country little more than must always happen in the common intercourse of life, will generally write the latter with greater elegance and propriety, than he who has neglected all application to the former. Mean time nothing seems more evident to common apprehension, than that a Man of Education should study and exercise himself in both : and it appears on this account greatly to be wished, that one of the Declamations for each Degree should be composed in English.

IT WOULD be superfluous to say much of the singular advantages of a correct and graceful Elocution ; how necessary it is, if he would do justice to his other abilities, to every one who is called upon to appear in public ; how ornamental and engaging even in common conversation and the ordinary intercourse of life : so much will the reputation of the Speaker and the influence of his argument, generally depend upon his manner, as well as upon his diction and sentiment. We cannot therefore but consider the Art of Speaking as a point which deserves great attention in a scheme of liberal



education: nor can we doubt but our Predecessors, in framing the Statute of Declamations, (though they have not so explicitly<sup>y</sup> declared it) intended this new exercise for a specimen as well of manly elocution as of polite composition. I would suppose then a just pronounciation, and a correctness of voice and manner, to be made an essential requisite to the due performance of every exercise. The presence of a large assembly will have the same happy influence on this important object, as upon every other: it will not fail to quicken the attention of the Candidate, and add weight to the authority of the Magistrate: and if a spirit of emulation should fortunately incite the Student to seek for previous instruction on this head, it might possibly give birth to some Public Institution relative to this branch of education, which might do honour to the University, and be of great advantage to the Public.

SUPPOSING the Exercises for the Degrees in Arts to be put upon any new establishment similar to what has been mentioned, it would be expedient on all accounts, to

<sup>y</sup> See the Statute.

pay a like attention to the Degree of Bachelor in Civil Law, so far as it is attainable without passing through Arts. This Degree, I apprehend, is contrary to the general tenour of our present system; and, though it be allowed by Statute in other cases, seems originally to have been granted to such Students only, as were obliged by the rules of their College to turn aside early into the Law Line. It has usually, and with good reason, been discouraged in persons not so circumstanced; and the regulations here suggested would introduce a kind of necessity of discouraging it still more; at least of diminishing (as far as possible) the weight of every consideration, which may have a tendency to recommend it. I would therefore propose, to oblige the Jurist to perform the same Exercises as the Artist, during the whole course of his Seven Years: excepting only, that instead of Determining he should hold his present Law Disputations, twice, for an hour each time, in Lent Term; that his Solemn Lectures should be two in Natural Philosophy, two in Moral Philosophy, and two in Civil Law; and lastly, that Jurisprudence should make part of his Second Examination.

HAVING gone through the several alterations which are, with great deference, proposed to the consideration of the University, it may be convenient to bring them into one view. Though they seem to promise a substantial and lasting improvement in a very important branch of our discipline, they will perhaps, upon recital, appear to be so moderate, and to coincide so perfectly with the general tenour of our present establishment, that they may be introduced into it with little trouble or inconvenience. In the scheme here suggested, it is proposed,

So FAR as relates to the Exercises for the Degree of BACHELOR OF ARTS :

I. To provide that the first part of the DISPUTATIONES IN PARVISO, which is usually called GENERALS, be duly superintended *a principio ad finem*: to reduce the length of them to one hour; and to hold them all at one particular time. To omit the latter part, commonly called JURAMENTS.

II. To provide that the Disputations called ANSWERING UNDER BACHELOR be duly superintended either the whole, or at least the greater part of the time.

To add to the preceding Exercises two DECLAMATIONS, one in English, the other in Latin, to be delivered publicly in the Theatre in Act Term.

III. To hold the EXAMINATION annually in Lent Term, either in the Theatre or in the Natural Philosophy School properly fitted up for the purpose, in the presence of the Congregation, and under the immediate direction of Examiners specially appointed : to ascertain and enlarge that part of the Examination which respects Mathematical Learning : to make the Historical Parts of the New Testament one of the Books prescribed by Statute ; and to subjoin the Articles of the Church of England : and lastly, to assign an honourable distinction to such Candidates as excel.

IN THE Exercises for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS :



I. To limit all the LENT DISPUTATIONS (such as respect the Scholar answering under Bachelor excepted) to such Sciences as are suitable to the standing of the Bachelor: to shorten the time; and to appoint the most convenient hours: and to provide that the Disputations subsequent to Ash-Wednesday be duly superintended either the whole, or at least the greater part of the time.

II. III. To omit the DISPUTATIONES APUD AUGUSTINENSES, and the DISPUTATIONES QUODLIBETICÆ.

IV. V. To have the SOLEMN LECTURES, and also the DECLAMATIONS, (one of the latter in English, the other in Latin) delivered publicly in the Theatre in Act Term: to provide that they be duly superintended and frequented; and that the best performances be honourably distinguished.

VI. To hold the EXAMINATION annually in Act Term, in the same form and manner as that for the Bachelor's Degree: to assign, among the other subjects of Examination, certain higher parts of Mathematical

Learning ; the Epistles in the New Testament, together with the Articles of the Church of England ; and the Book of Genesis in Hebrew.

IN THE Exercises for the Degree of  
BACHELOR IN CIVIL LAW :

To assign the same Exercises to the Jurist as to the Artist, excepting,

1. That instead of Determining, he hold his DISPUTATIONES JURIDICÆ, twice, for an hour each time, in Lent Term.

2. That his SOLEMN LECTURES be two in Natural Philosophy ; two in Moral Philosophy ; and two in Civil Law.

3. That JURISPRUDENCE be one of the Sciences at his Second Examination.

IN THE Exercises for EACH DEGREE :

To provide that the Candidate deliver them with such a correctness of pronunciation, voice, and manner, as may tend to give him a just and graceful Elocution.

IT WAS not suitable to the design of this Essay to enter into several particulars, which naturally occur as essential to the due arrangement and execution of any plan like this; and which, it is conceived, may be easily and satisfactorily adjusted: such as the nomination, qualification, and stipend, of the Examiners and Masters of the Schools; the funds from whence the stipend may arise; the most probable method of rendering the former office eligible to men of the first character and estimation in the University; how far it may be expedient to recommend the one, by making it a kind of preparation and qualification for the other: and the like. It seemed unnecessary to expatiate on the various advantages which will naturally flow from an effectual reformation of the Public Exercises: such as the additional incitement it will afford the Student to pay due attention to the literary discipline of his College, and the private scheme of education prescribed to him; its tendency consequently to diminish dissipation, irregularity, and expence; to cooperate therefore with every laudable endeavour, whether of the

Public Magistrate or of private Societies, to answer the great ends of their institution, in the promotion of learning and virtue. ---- If the GENERAL EXPEDIENCY of making some provision for the better conduct of the Academical Exercises, should induce the University to take the matter into their consideration, there is no doubt but the OBJECT will be found worthy their attention; the Public Wisdom will devise the MEANS.

I CANNOT conclude without observing, that though a solid improvement in a matter of such beneficial and extensive influence can never be unseasonable, yet the present time seems particularly convenient for promoting it. This is an age of improvements as well as of extravagancies: if it sometimes proposes alterations unnecessary and excessive, it sometimes presents us too with schemes that are rational and laudable. It is certainly an age of free inquiry; from which, agreeably to the common course of human affairs, wherein good and evil are almost inseparable, we may reasonably have some valuable regulations and amendments to hope for, as well as absurd refinements and dangerous innovations to fear. We cannot, in any case, more



effectually defeat the one, than by promoting and encouraging the other. As Public Establishments of every kind will always be objects of envy and reproach, if there be any persons so little acquainted with the true interests of their Country, as to entertain unfavourable sentiments of an University, which has ever done honour to the English Nation, and contributed largely to the Public Good, she cannot, I conceive, better refute the unkind suggestions of her enemies, or more surely engage the countenance and protection of her friends, than by reviving and improving the true salutary spirit of her ancient discipline and institutions, and rendering them every day more eminently conducive to the advancement of Religion and Learning.

effectually defeat the one, than by promoting  
and encouraging the other. As Public  
Establishments of every kind will always  
be objects of envy and reproach, if there  
be any persons so little acquainted with  
the true interests of their Country, as to  
cherish unfavourable sentiments of an  
University, which has ever done honour  
to the English Nation, and contributed  
largely to the Public Good, the danger I  
conceive, better to let the unkind sugges-  
tions of her enemies, than to excite  
the countenance and protection of her  
friends, than by retarding and improving the  
true spirit of her ancient discipline  
and institutions, and rendering them every  
day more eminently conducive to the ad-  
vancement of Religion and Learning.



[illegible]